Case 2681

Heliastes ovalis F. Steindachner, 1900 (currently *Chromis ovalis*; Osteichthyes, Perciformes): proposed conservation of the specific name

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Abstract. The purpose of this application is the conservation of the well-known and widely-used name *Chromis ovalis* (F. Steindachner), 1900 for the Oval Chromis, a damselfish from Hawaii. Steindachner had in 1866 published *Chromis ovalis* as the name of an African cichlid, but this name has long been regarded as invalid and the two species have never been classified together in *Chromis*.

1. The name *Chromis ovalis* (Steindachner, 1900) is currently, and for many years has been universally, applied to a well-known endemic Hawaiian marine damselfish of the family POMACENTRIDAE. This name, originally published as *Heliastes ovalis*, is a junior secondary homonym of *Chromis ovalis* Steindachner, 1866, the name of an African cichlid, which was transferred to *Tilapia* Smith, 1840 by Boulenger (1899, p. 119), and which is now regarded as a junior subjective synonym of *Haplochromis moffati* Castelnau, 1861 in accordance with the revision by Regan (1922, p. 257). Both *Tilapia* and *Haplochromis* are freshwater genera of the family CICHLIDAE. The species *Chromis ovalis* Steindachner, 1866 and *Heliastes ovalis* Steindachner, 1900 have never been classified together in the genus *Chromis*, but under Article 59b of the Code the 1900 specific name is invalid.

2. Jenkins (1903, p. 458) transferred *H. ovalis* to *Chromis*, and *C. ovalis* was used thereafter. Whitley (1929, p. 55) suggested that the junior subjective synonym *C. velox* Jenkins, 1901 (p. 393) be used instead of *C. ovalis* because of the formal problem of secondary homonymy. The name *velox* has been so used in only four publications: Fowler (1931, p. 351; 1938, pp. 235, 291), Tinker (1944, p. 279) and von Wahlert (1955, p. 324). Thus *Chromis velox* has remained unused for 33 years and both Fowler and Tinker later adopted *ovalis* (see below).

3. The widespread usage of *Chromis ovalis* for the damselfish includes the following 22 publications: Allen (1975, pp. 87, 89), Brock (1980, p. [321]), Fowler (1940, p. 784), Gosline (1965, p. 824), Gosline & Brock (1960, pp. 212, 331), Hobson (1972, pp. 717, 721, 728; 1974, pp. 984–985), Hobson & Chave (1972, p. 50), Hourigan & Reese (1987, table 3), Jordan & Evermann (1973, pp. 200–201, fig. 114), Masuda & Allen (1987, p. 295), Miller *et al.* (1979, pp. 69, 179), Nelson (1967, p. 290), Randall (1981, fig. 91;

1985, p. 34), Randall & Swerdloff (1973, pp. 329, 341–343), Swerdloff (1970a; 1970b, p. 374), Taylor ([1982], p. 11), Tinker (1978 and 1982, p. 278) and Walsh (1987, tables 1–2, figs 4, 6). The holotype of *C. ovalis* (Steindachner, 1900) is in the Überseemuseum in Bremen, and was illustrated by von Wahlert (1955, fig. 2).

4. Under Article 59b of the Code the specific name *ovalis* Steindachner, 1900 is invalid because its replacement had been proposed before 1961 (Whitley, 1929, p. 55). However, as explained above, the junior subjective synonym *velox* has not gained acceptance and its substitution now for *ovalis* would be an unnecessary and unjustified cause of confusion.

5. The International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature is accordingly asked:

(1) to use its plenary powers to rule that the specific name *ovalis* Steindachner, 1900 (p. 502), as published in the binomen *Heliastes ovalis*, is not invalid by reason of having been rejected before 1961 as a junior secondary homonym of *Chromis ovalis* Steindachner, 1866;

(2) to place on the Official List of Specific Names in Zoology the name *ovalis* Steindachner, 1900, as published in the binomen *Heliastes ovalis* Steindachner, 1900 (not invalid despite having been rejected before 1961 as a junior secondary homonym).

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